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## IMITATION GEMS AND THEIR WEARERS.

### An Interview With an Expert.

"Yes," said the proprietor of a well-known "imitation gem" shop, not far from Regent Circus, "imitation stones are much more worn than formerly. And why not? They are as pretty; indeed, it is only experts who can detect them nowadays, so well are the real gems imitated. And, then, they are so much cheaper. "Do I mean to say that detection is impossible?" he continued, repeating my question. "Well, I don't go so far as that, but very nearly."

A little tray was pushed across the glass case towards me. It was nearly full of stones: opals, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, turquoises, emeralds, and pearls, the latter both white and black.

"Those are mixed gems; some are real and some we manufacture in our factory near Paris. See if you can pick out which are real stones. Take them to the light," said the man, "if you like to, sir."

I stepped to the door into the light, which was unusually strong even for a July day in London, and attempted to "spot" the genuine stones. I felt all the while that I was going wrong with the pearls, diamonds, emeralds, and turquoises, the rubies and sapphires seeming to me, after a close scrutiny, comparatively easy of detection. Whilst I held the little tray, with its sparkling, scintillating contents in my hand—which, if all the stones had been real and of high grade, would have represented a small fortune—I must confess to at first feeling much as I should had I been asked to guess which thimble the pea was under.

After about ten minutes, however, I had made a selection, and we both returned to the counter. The gems I had chosen as real were spread out on a shallow tray lined with white velvet, and, fixing a lens into his eye, the jeweller proceeded to examine my selection. I had picked out twenty-six stones of various kinds as real. Seventeen were imitation. My greatest failure was with the diamonds, pearls, and turquoises, which would, I think, have deceived almost anybody, so true in colour, lustre, and general appearance were they. My greatest success was with rubies and sapphires. Even to my comparatively inexperienced eyes, imitations of the former seemed "murky" in colour, and of the latter wanting in the peculiar "fire" which fine stones have.

"You have done remarkably well," said he when he had finished showing me my mistakes; "far better, indeed, than nine out of ten amateurs—I suppose you are an amateur?" he observed—"would have done."

"You would be surprised to know how many of the best people wear imitation stones. I could tell you some names that

(Continued on fourth page.)